

in the form of instructions to perform the assay defined in Claim 1. As such Claim 24, as well as the claims of Groups III-V are linked together by the special technical feature of Claim 1. Accordingly it is respectfully requested that the restriction requirement be withdrawn and all of Claims 1-36 be examined on the merits.

Because the restriction requirement is essentially an administrative matter applicant does not at this time make any comment on the merits or accuracy of the Office's characterization of the Poelstra et al. reference, nor upon the merits of Claim 24 or of any other claim *vis á vis* that reference, beyond what is set forth herein above. However the applicant does reserve the right to make such timely comment as may be appropriate when the Examiner's action on the merits is received, at which time such comment may become seasonable.

The application is now believed to be in condition for examination on the merits. Early and favorable examination is earnestly solicited. If for any reason the Examiner feels that consultation with Applicant's attorney would be helpful in the advancement of the prosecution, she is invited to call the telephone number below for an interview.

Respectfully submitted,

By


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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the United States Patent and Trademark Office, Fax No. (703) 308-4242 on July 8, 2002.


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